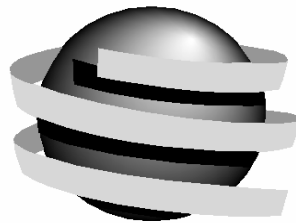


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INTERNEWS

INTERNEWS NETWORK

FINAL REPORT

USAID Award Number HDA-A-00-03-0019-00

Building Independent Media in Afghanistan

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Executive Summary

When the Taliban were ousted from power in late 2001, Afghanistan had no functioning press. For its entire history, Afghan broadcast media was state-run. Private press, if allowed under the various regimes, was frequently censored by authorities. Given this background, developments across the media sector in the past four years should be seen as an immense success. Today there are 18 television stations, some 40 independent radio stations and upwards of 300 newspapers and magazines. Radio, the dominant medium of news and information access, reaches approximately 62 percent of the Afghan population.¹

Internews Network, with funds from USAID-OTI grant HDA-A-00-03-0019-00, has played an integral role in establishing this access to information through the development of a network of nongovernmental radio stations across the country. On February 14, 2003, USAID-OTI awarded Internews a US\$1,449,383 grant to implement the twelve-month project, *Building Independent Media in Afghanistan*. The program was designed to nurture new and existing radio broadcasting in Afghanistan. Through a succession of cost extensions, the program ran to July 31, 2006. With support from this grant, Internews was the primary supporter of 31 radio stations, and provided major technical support to over a half-dozen other new stations. Internews also provided continuing technical support and journalism and training opportunities to regional state radio stations, launched an Afghan media development NGO, and played a key role in altering the Afghan media regulatory environment to make it more accessible and less prohibitive.

Security, the challenging political, legal, economic, and social environment for media development, and difficult terrain have all presented obstacles to smooth implementation of program activities. However, the project's ultimate goal – maximizing the coverage, diversity and local ownership of independent broadcasters across the country – has more than met our expectations.

Internews' *Building Independent Media in Afghanistan* has seen a unique blending of the local and the national. Local correspondents from around the country contribute to Internews' national information program, *BaKhabar*, and both local and national stations also independently broadcast locally produced programs. Internews has also managed to encourage inter-regional exchange of news and information amongst journalists and station managers.

The media situation in Afghanistan has completely transformed since 2002. The independent radio stations set up by Internews and other private radio and TV initiatives employ thousands of journalists, managers, and technicians who have received training and practical experience in developing, building, managing and maintaining radio stations. There is a pluralistic independent media scene that communicates with over 60% of the population – and a mechanism for the populace to communicate with the government - where before there was not.

Challenges for radio stations, and for each of the media outlets in Afghanistan remain. Managing and sustaining a media business in Afghanistan's difficult economic and

¹ Internews, *Report on the Internews Media Review and Planning Conference*, October 2005.

security environment will always be complicated. The Afghan organizations that Internews has worked with in the past three years have shown their determination to continue. Despite threats from local warlords or the Taliban; economic challenges, or government restrictions – these media outlets have survived, often thrived, and continue to grow.

USAID Grant Overview

On February 14, 2003, USAID-OTI awarded Internews a US\$1,449,383 grant to implement the twelve-month project, *Building Independent Media in Afghanistan*. The program aimed to nurture new and existing radio broadcasting in Afghanistan. Under Internews' previous USAID-OTI grant, Internews worked with regional state-owned radio broadcasters to support their capacity to produce radio news and information. This subsequent program sought to fundamentally alter Afghanistan's media landscape by supporting new, independent radio broadcast outlets around the country.

The program's primary objective was to support the creation of independent, Afghan-controlled news and information that would reach a substantial proportion of the population. The key aim in the first year of the grant was the development of 14 nongovernmental radio stations in selected cities around the country. The stations were locally owned and operated community, university, and commercial radio stations. The program also focused on providing guidance for potential stations to navigate Ministry of Information and Ministry of Communications regulations and procedures. A corollary objective for the program was to foster production and journalism skills, as well as the managerial and business acumen within stations necessary to move towards eventual self-sufficiency.

In addition, Internews' program supported independent radio production, to be broadcast on existing and new radio stations in Afghanistan. Programming focused on news and information and development.

Internews sought to work in partnership with NGOs and UN agencies wherever possible. Internews designed cooperative arrangements and MoUs with multiple organizations involved in media development, including IMPACS, Afghans for Civil Society, Arman FM, IMS, Article XIX, UNDP, UNESCO, UN HABITAT, AINA, IWPR, Equal Access, Media Action International, the Baltic Media Centre, and IOM.

Key program elements of the original grant were as follows:

- **Independent Radio Development:** To provide managerial, technical, and financial support for the development of new, independent radio stations in selected cities across Afghanistan. Under this program requirement, Internews planned to provide equipment grants to stations based on Internews' assessment of their potential for future development. Internews also sought to create links between independent stations across the country, to encourage a cooperative network of stations.
- **Production Unit:** To create and distribute collaborative, innovative radio programs for broadcast by local and national stations by CD and satellite.
- **Capacity Building:** To provide professional journalism and technical training to staffs of radio stations. Internews planned to offer these intensive trainings both to staff of new stations and to existing government stations that showed interest in

building these skills and a commitment to providing reliable information to audiences.

- **Media Policy, Advocacy Support:** To provide ongoing support to build an internationally comparable legal and regulatory environment. As part of this initiative, Internews aimed to initiate regular policy consultations on a range of issues, including clear guidelines for broadcast license application and establishment of cohesive rules governing allocation of radio frequency spectrum use. Internews also sought to provide institutional support for local advocacy efforts.

Modification 1

The grant was modified on March 29, 2003 to increase USAID-OTI's total obligated amount from US\$600,000 to US\$1,124,495.

Modification 2

The grant was modified on July 2, 2004 to provide an additional US\$3,323,625 in funds and extend the estimated completion date to December 31, 2004.

Under the second modification of the original cooperative agreement, the following modifications were made to the project description:

- **Independent Radio Development:** Internews committed to build an additional six independent radio stations, increasing the network to 20 stations. This aimed to extended broadcast coverage to rural areas, with the goal of Internews-supported stations reaching a minimum of 35% of the population. Advertising and continued donor support would be the primary means of facilitating station financial sustainability.
- **Production Unit:** To have national programming available on Internews-supported local FM stations, with a target reach of 20% of the population. This component aimed to increase news and information about the 2004 presidential election. This component also included distributing radio programming to stations, and included a short-wave broadcast service of programming. Finally, the modification included an expansion of Internews' broadcast and distribution network to ensure it delivered a minimum of two hours of radio programming per day to every station in the country.
- **Signals Analysis:** This program modification introduced basic signal analysis to the scope of the project. Using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) this initiative enabled media reach in Afghanistan to be mapped against population surveys for the first time. Internews trained Afghan technicians to provide signal analysis surveys and two national signal maps illustrating how far each broadcast signal reached, along with population estimates.
- **National Media Survey:** Internews planned to survey how Afghans use media. Initially, Internews planned provide The University of Washington with a sub-grant to conduct a survey on Afghan listening habits, in the expectation that this data would

be used to better understand information flows across the country and to develop better programming. In further modifications, Internews received permission to reprogram these funds, and OTI commissioned this research directly from Altai Consulting.

Modification 3

The project was further modified on August 17, 2004 to extend the completion date to March 31, 2005.

Modification 4

An additional modification came into effect on March 31, 2005 to extend the expected completion date to July 31, 2005, and increase the total USAID-OTI obligated amount to US\$4,842,585.

This modification included an additional program element: the development of local capacity to support station self-sufficiency and developing the institutional capacity of Internews' program unit, named Salaam Watandar, and a local media development organization, Nai. This element of the program enhanced prospects of sustaining Internews-sponsored stations. Internews committed to work with both Nai and *Salaam Watandar* to develop the skills necessary for managing budgets, raising funds, writing grants, generating income, and developing strategic plans. The modification began with a small sub-grant to Nai so that they could manage part of the program themselves, and a commitment to doing the same with Salaam Watandar by the end of 2005.

Internews also committed to carry out feasibility plans aimed at setting up Salaam Watandar as an independent broadcaster in early 2005.

Other modifications under modification 4:

- **Independent Radio Development:** The number of Internews primary-supported stations Internews was to set up increased to 29 (an increase of nine stations), and Internews committed to continue financial, technical, and managerial support to the stations.
- **Business Development Department:** The new Business Development Department also undertook to draft business plans with the stations.
- Nai received a sub-grant to develop curriculum and training materials, which led over time to their complete management of training components under this grant.
- The National Media Survey component included in the previous modification was removed, and given to an outside contractor, Altai Consulting.

Modification 5

The fifth modification took effect on August 1, 2005. It extended the completion date of the cooperative agreement to July 31, 2006 and increased the award budget by

\$3,100,101 to \$7,942,686, and the total obligated amount by \$1,000,000 to a total of \$5,842,585.

Key project elements under this fifth project modification include:

- **Independent Radio Development:** Rather than expand the network any further, this project component sought to *strengthen the capacity* of existing radio stations and nascent distribution networks. This modification focused on sustaining the existing network of stations through managerial training, the development of business plans and revised financial systems, and strengthening production capacity and local programming. Internews, in partnership with the local NGO Nai, worked with stations on ironing out any licensing, regulatory, and legal issues, while supporting them in developing improved government relations.
- **Business Development Department:** This component committed to providing knowledge and support for stations in management, marketing, income generation and business development. Internews sought to ensure station viability by raising station revenue through advertising, public service announcements, and other initiatives sourced by business development officers. Under this modification, Internews aimed to ensure station sustainability without continued direct support from USAID and Internews.
- **Institutional Development:** This element aimed to promote Nai's institutional capacity to provide targeted training in media management, radio journalism and radio production as well as to increase the quality and quantity of media and educational programming.
- **Media Policy, Advocacy Support:** This modification introduced a further focus on strengthening the enabling environment for Afghan media through the provision of an Afghan Media Lawyer to work with Nai to design its media law work. The Media Lawyer would provide training to stations and staff as well as collaborate on advocacy initiatives. Internews also undertook to provide support for the development of Broadcast and Journalism Associations in the expectation that broadcasters could collectively express their shared interests and rights.
- **Production Unit:** This element sought to increase Salaam Watandar programming reach and secure a Kabul-based FM station to broadcast its programming.
- **Sub-grants:** Under this modification, Internews undertook the management and administration of sub-grants to Afghan media NGOs Sayara, Pajhwok, Nai, and CIJ.

Modification 6

The sixth modification, effective November 30, 2005, increased the total obligated amount by US\$1,000,000 to US\$ 6,842,585.

Modification 7

The seventh and final modification came into effect on March 20, 2006 and saw the total obligated amount increased by US\$1,000,101 to US\$7,842,686.

Statement of Outcomes

Projected Outcome	Result
Original Proposal	
14 new nongovernmental stations built; substantially increased broadcast coverage.	Met. Internews launched 14 stations during the grant's first phase.
Framework to guide station development created.	Met. Internews and IMPACS designed and distributed "starter packs" for communities interested in launching independent stations. The packs introduced the concept of independent broadcasters, offered guidelines for setting up a station and provided an application for Internews support. The packages were distributed in Dari language.
Seven hours of Internews-produced programs distributed weekly for free to radio broadcast outlets.	Exceeded. By February 2004, the Tanin production network was distributing 90 minutes of programming per day
Strengthened relationships between network stations through cooperative programming.	Met. By February 2004, Internews' current affairs program had recruited and trained 10 journalists from partner stations to report for <i>BaKhabar</i> . Internews stations also worked with the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) and the Institute for Media and Civil Society (IMPACS) stations to provide joint daily coverage of 2004 elections.
Afghan advocacy NGOs better equipped to advocate on behalf of free press and improved media regulation.	Met. Afghan advocacy NGOs gained a stronger understanding of the Media Law through consultations and presentations in Kabul, Ghazni and Khost.
Provision of policy and regulatory advice to the government on establishing an Independent Broadcasting Agency, a more regulated distribution of transmission licenses and a code of ethics for electronic media.	Met. Internews-led negotiations produced a cheaper and simplified licensing procedure. In 2004, Internews supported the formation of a non-governmental radio station association.
Implemented on-site trainings and residences in journalism and radio production at all stations across the	Met. Internews provided on-site mentoring programs and training in technical/production skills as each of

country.	the stations launched. Internews also continued to provide Kabul-based training.
Host at least one management training for station managers.	Internews held three management conferences in 2005.
Modification 2/3	
Network of stations increased by six to 20; radio coverage expanded to at least 35% of the population.	Exceeded. Internews was the primary support for the launch of 28 stations during the first and second grant stages.
Targeted journalism and radio production training in preparation for 2004 elections.	Met. Internews ran ongoing Kabul-based workshops on elections coverage.
Election day coverage broadcast – National coverage broadcast on at least 15 stations, reaching 20% of the population.	Exceeded. Salaam Watandar, Internews' daily news and entertainment program, began broadcasting live on October 9, 2004, the day of the presidential elections. The program broadcast live for 12 hours to 25 independent and three state radio stations.
Tanin distribution network expanded to distribute at least two hours of broadcast daily.	Met.
Technicians trained and producing quarterly GIS reports.	Partially met. GIS technicians undertook training and produced a GIS report for each of the stations.
Modification 4	
Network of Stations increased to 29; radio coverage expanded to at least 40% of the population.	Exceeded. Internews provided primary support to 31 independent stations by the end of modification four.
Report assessing potential for Salaam Watandar to stand-alone written.	Met. However, Internews felt Salaam Watandar needed further institutional development prior to considering a transition to independent management.
Nai has strengthened institutional capacity to operate as a stand-alone NGO.	Met. Nai has moved from strength to strength in media training advocacy. Efforts to gain independent funding were also successful.
Station staff trained in business management and advertising sales.	Met. Internews trained local business officers in regional stations in business management and advertising. Business development officers later ran local advertising campaigns.
Station staff trained in radio technology and operations.	Met.

Media Monitor report published.	Met. Internews continued publishing Media Monitor Reports, and eventually handed the process over to local partner Nai.
Modification 5	
Stations receive technical support, move towards sustainability. Station revenue increases.	Met. Stations received regular technical assistance, monthly incomes generated through <i>Salaam Watanar</i> Public Service Announcements and financial management training.
Stations have written business plans, bank accounts, financial and management systems.	Met.
Stations gain experience in maintaining equipment, computer systems and information management.	Met. Each of the Internews-supported stations manages its own equipment, computer systems and information. Repairs and upgrades have also incorporated staff technical training.
GIS reports allow for better understanding of signal strength and reach, allowing stations to define their audience.	Met. Internews generated GIS reports for each of its stations.
Nai better able to support Afghan media.	Met.
Stations have better understanding of the regulatory environment and can operate legally, have functioning boards and written by-laws.	Met. Internews exposed stations to management and regulatory standards through its start-up training and development of the Afghan Independent Journalists Association and the Afghan Independent Radio Association.
Afghan and international audiences aware of abuses and advances in Afghan media rights, freedom of expression.	Partially met. Media Watch reports were regularly distributed. Intermittent advocacy initiatives, such as World Press Freedom Day celebrations were also held.
More indigenous programming from Afghan producers available.	Met. <i>Salaam Watandar</i> alone broadcasts up to nine hours of locally produced programming each day.
Afghan audiences receive more news.	Met. <i>Bakhabar</i> alone broadcasts one and a half hours of news daily.

Analysis of Media Development in Afghanistan

Since the fall of the Taliban, media, including radio, television, print, and Internet in Afghanistan have grown exponentially. For a country once dominated by a few government outlets, the mere presence of a vibrant community of commercial and government outlets that operate today is a phenomenal success. In 2002, there were just 17 state-owned radio broadcasters, and one nongovernmental radio station. Just four years later there are some 40 registered nongovernmental radio broadcasters, over 300 print outlets, and 18 television broadcasters. A more welcoming regulatory environment for independent media has facilitated this amazing transformation. Whereas before licensing and radio frequencies were distributed on an ad hoc basis, government authorities have now implemented a cheaper, simpler, and more standardized procedure. With these simple and predictable procedures in place, a myriad of media outlets have appeared.

Since 2001, Afghan media has improved, not only in numbers, but also in quality. Significantly more international media broadcasters are utilizing local Afghan media outlets and journalists as a means of covering news events in Afghanistan. Local communities have embraced the media in a manner never before seen across Afghanistan, spurred by the host of high quality radio broadcasts distributed across the nation, covering topics that range from health, education, raising children, to agriculture and politics. There are countless stories from a range of broadcast outlets that have either prompted the government to act, or enabled community members to better protect their rights. While the promulgation of three different media laws over the course of four years has done little to suggest consistency in media policy, the most recent manifestation of the law shows reason for optimism. Hailed as the “freest in the region,” the new law, if implemented, may go a long way to supporting the development of a free press in Afghanistan.

Regulatory Environment

Commercial and community radio outlets were slow to develop in Afghanistan in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Taliban. The early stages of the reconstruction saw a concern both from the community and government leaders that the new interim political period would not be stable enough to support non-state media. Until the fall of the Taliban, non-state broadcast media in Afghanistan had been prohibited by every Afghan government. In late 2001 Afghanistan’s transitional government approved the publication of non-state newspapers, and in February 2002 the Ministry of Information and Culture removed regulations banning non-governmental broadcasting. Even then, the community was not lining up to broadcast. As of January 2003, only one non-government station, Radio Solh, originally funded by the French as a voice for the Northern Alliance, was broadcasting. The Minister of Information and Culture Makdoom Raheen reportedly said he had a stack of documents to register newspapers, magazines, and journals, but, “No potential private broadcaster has approached me for permission to broadcast.”

Erratic regulatory requirements, which relied heavily on personal connections, and concern about the political stability of the new government discouraged the development of radio broadcasters. The licensing system was marginally formalized in mid-2003, with applicants required to obtain a ‘concession’ from the Ministry of Information and Culture

and a frequency assignment from the Ministry of Communications. The Information Ministry license cost an applicant 20,000 Afghani (about \$400) and was a relatively straightforward procedure. The Ministry of Communication also charged a registration fee of \$800 for each station and a prohibitive \$2,000 to \$3,000 per year for frequency allocations. As part of the frequency allocation the ministry also demanded formal approval from local governors. In late 2003 that this process was further simplified, after significant advocacy from Internews, with the Ministry of Communications reducing the frequency allocation fees to between \$150 and \$800.

The Growth of Afghanistan's Independent Media

Once the financial and political aspects of the registration process were loosened, nongovernmental stations began to mushroom across the country. In the summer of 2002, Afghanistan had 17 operational state regional stations plus Radio Solh, which reached a relatively small population in the Shomali Plains. In 2006 Internews estimates that more than 11 million people, over 50% of the population, have access to independent, Internews-supported broadcasts.

Locally-initiated projects to unify media actors, such as the Afghanistan Independent Radio Association, are also emerging. These associations indicate a greater maturity in the organization behind the media sector. Similarly, growing initiatives in business development and requests for management training show that local media are determined to stay.

Radio broadcasting, and in particular nongovernmental radio broadcasting, continues to dominate media consumption in Afghanistan, although by mid-2006, where TV and electricity is present, TV has been making strong inroads in popularity in the evenings. An orally based culture, where illiteracy is rife and where newspapers and televisions are prohibitively expensive for a significant bulk of the population, radio broadcasting offers a cheap alternative. A 2004 Kabul-based Internews survey of audience listening habits showed that listeners of independent radio outnumbered those for government stations. The independent stations also attracted younger audiences, with the average age of a Radio Arman (an independent radio station based in Kabul) listener at 27 years old, while the BBC's average listening age was 38 and RTA's (Radio Television Afghanistan, the state-owned broadcaster) was 40. The most recent media analysis, published by Altai Consulting in March 2005,² showed that together Radio Watandar and Radio Arman, both independent stations, have up to 95% of market share in Kabul.

Yet radio broadcasting reach and access can still be improved. While Altai Consulting's March 2005 survey³ put radio ownership in Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar e Sharif, Jalalabad, Khost at 90%, a 2004 Internews-supported listener survey showed that rural

² Altai Consulting, "Afghan Media - Three Years After,": Nationwide Media Evaluation Project, United States Agency for International Development, September 2004/March 2005.

³ Altai Consulting, "Afghan Media - Three Years After,": Nationwide Media Evaluation Project, United States Agency for International Development, September 2004/March 2005.

areas had significantly lower listenership.⁴ At that time, 44% of households surveyed owned a working radio set. Some either owned sets that worked, but were out of batteries, while others owned broken sets, and others again simply did not own radio set. The survey showed that one radio was frequently shared among two or three neighboring households.

An Emerging Free Press

Both journalists and citizens have embraced the fruits of an emerging free press. According to a report published by Nai,⁵ an overwhelming number of journalists feel the emergence of new media outlets has created an atmosphere of pluralism that encourages significantly more progress towards democracy than at any time in the country's past. A vast majority of those journalists believe the media increases citizens' ability and capacity to construct transparent and accountable governance. Community responses have been no less enthusiastic.

For example:

- At the inauguration of Radio Jaihoon in Kunduz province, the local commissioner praised local radio stations as an excellent means of connecting local communities with their government and the rest of the country.
- When Salaam Watandar aired a two hour program entitled "Why did you vote? Why didn't you vote?" phone lines were jammed with callers eager to share their opinions.
- After Pajhwok Afghan News (PAN), an Afghan news agency, published a report on mass graves in Paktika, UNAMA, the Afghan government and the Afghan Human Rights Commission initiated an investigation into the graves.
- When PAN reported the deaths of children in a camp in Mazar-e-Sharif, authorities visited the center and moved remaining children to rental houses to prevent further deaths from cold weather.
- In its first month of operations, Radio Mille Payghman in Logar province received 300 letters from listeners supporting their broadcast.
- After Salaam Watandar discussed threatened national media strikes in support of jailed magazine editor Mohaqiq Nasab, a worker from the Afghan Civil Society Forum commended the station on their reporting saying it "had a great impact on Mohaqiq Nasab's release."

Independent Media Receives International Recognition

International media observers have recognized Afghanistan's strengthening media sector:

- Caroline Buckingham of Asia Pulse wrote to Pajhwok Afghan News, "congratulations to all the staff at Pajhwok for a terrific service – much appreciated by us at Asia Pulse. We value a strong, independent voice and most importantly, want to hear the local perspective rather than news created by and tailored for a Western audience."

⁴ Kamal, Sarah, *Disconnected from Discourse: Women's Radio Listening in Rural Samangan, Afghanistan*, February 2004.

⁵ Nai, *Media Needs Survey*, July 2005

- Ann Ninan of Inter Press Service said, “It is crucial and important to support an independent media initiative like Pajhwok Afghan News in Afghanistan. PAN is an excellent source of information on Afghanistan.” Other news sources in Afghanistan have been picked up by international media agencies

Elections Coverage

One particular event that should be singled out as a phenomenal success for the Afghan media, is the coverage of both the presidential and parliamentary elections in October 2004 and September 2005, respectively. In a ground-breaking broadcast *Salam Watandar* (“*Hello Countryman*”), an Internews-supported national news and current affairs radio service in Afghanistan, produced 16 hours of live coverage during the parliamentary elections on September 18, the first legislative elections in Afghanistan since 1969.

Remaining Challenges

While the prolific growth of Afghan media is encouraging as an indicator of emerging freedom of expression and public participation in social and political life, the media sector is in its early stages and has been buoyed by donor funds to date. While business development efforts have begun, most media are far from achieving sustainability without international support in the immediate future. This underlying constraint means that further developments in the sector need to be guided by targeted, strategic, longer-term plans.

Attacks against media workers continue. One week after a seminar exploring the future of Afghan media, the country’s National Security Department issued an unofficial directive calling on the media not to cover insurgents and not to produce stories critical of the Afghan National Army or ISAF. Furthermore, despite many positive provisions, the country's newest media law also includes a prohibition on publication of “matters contrary to the principles of Islam and offensive to other religions and sects.” This language is evasively broad, leaving journalists and broadcasters vulnerable to charges of blasphemy, an offense punishable by death. Internews’ local partner organization, Nai, conducted a media survey in July 2005, which indicated that at least 54% of Afghan journalists reported being intimidated or harassed for covering the presidential and parliamentary elections. The same study showed that 70% of the threats come from warlords or local government authorities. The survey also suggested that these individual intimidation tactics were on the rise.

Yet whatever challenges remain, security conditions for media outlets in Afghanistan have improved immeasurably. For example, when Radio Sharq first began signal testing in Jalalabad in August 2003, the Nangahar governor Haju Deen Mohammed ordered the station closed after ten days so he and local leaders could “discuss the future of the station.” In late 2004, border authorities demanded that employees of Radio Spin Ghar provide them with free power, with threats of bombings or accusations of being members of ‘Al Qaeda’ if they did not comply. Media outlets across the board continue to face challenges, intimidation and harassment. Yet today these difficulties are more likely to take the form of threats to individual journalists, disapproval from government agencies after critical reports into local or national incidents and inappropriate fines or detention.

The ability to broadcast community opinions has also been a battle hard fought by independent stations in Afghanistan. The Internews-supported station, Radio Watandar, with its “Public Loudspeaker” programming that allows listeners to ring the station and voice their opinions is an innovative program that has sparked the interests of the audience. According to the 2006 Altai Consulting survey, Radio Watandar has a 25% share of the Kabul market. On this station, Kabul residents call up to tell jokes, sing songs, and complain about government officials and services, such as the city’s lack of electricity. Similarly, In May 2004, Radio Qarabagh directly broadcast a number of listener’s letters written in response to a speech by Kabul Mayor Rashid on Teacher’s Day. The local mayor immediately demanded the right to vet all letters prior to broadcast.

On June 14 and 15, 2006, Internews held a two-day workshop to review the Afghan media’s progress and continuing challenges. Afghan journalists expressed confidence in the progress made by the media over the last four years, but called for more capacity building and support. Participants were frustrated with what they called the lack of a clear understanding about basic journalism principals and reporting standards. At the same time, attendees said they were impressed with the degree of public support for the Afghan press. “For the first time, the public accepts and supports the media because they are independent and able to express the truth and the views of the people,” they said. Attendees said they were happy with government support for freedom of expression, but they complained about a lack of clarity in the media law and how authorities handle violations. Journalists also expressed frustration with self-censorship and pressure by the authorities, including threats, harassment and intimidation. Participants said they would also like to see international assistance to facilitate the development of copyright laws and additional journalism training in the areas of business development and management.

By far, the strongest challenge facing Afghan media outlets today is the difficulty of sustainability alongside declining donor funds. While some media agencies are performing well in terms of business development and sustainability, the most common means of financial support media outlet receives remains public service announcements for broadcasters, and donor supported campaigns for print outlets. Commercial advertisements are on the increase as a means of supporting media, however, the Afghan economy is still in its nascent stage and it will be difficult to solely rely on commercial advertisements as an income generating mechanism in the near future. Nai’s 2005 media survey also suggested that half of independent radio stations operate entirely on advertisement revenue while only two percent of state radio stations operate on such funds. That said, stronger management skills, financial experience, and marketing knowledge would benefit the Afghan media sector as a whole.

Women and the Media

Much has been said about the plight of Afghan women, and developing ways to communicate with Afghan women who have little or no control over their life choices, is challenging. Independent radio broadcasting presents an interesting opportunity in this regard. Research has shown that women are a particularly large share of the listening audience of radio broadcasting – particularly during the day time while they work inside the house and their male relatives are at work. Altai’s 2006 report reaffirmed this assumption, noting that women were large consumers of all media. Anecdotal

discussions with women throughout the country also indicate that women are hungry for information about other women – from different provinces, situations and backgrounds – and that more targeted radio programs will increase the benefits of this listening power.. The small number of women-focused programs, such as Salaam Watandar's *Siyasar* program have generally been supported and welcomed by the community, with women being eager to be interviewed and directly participate in the program broadcasts. To date this program has over two million listeners.

Although programming for women is increasing, women remain under-represented, both as targets, focus-audiences and creators of radio programming. There are four female-run radio stations in Afghanistan. The Killid Group (TKG) produce a national magazine, *Mursal*, which focuses on women's issues in an easy-to-read format The cost of this magazine, however, makes it highly prohibitive for most women. Throughout much of the country, the notion of women working outside the home remains atypical, even though it is may be a financial necessity for many of them. Women also remain under-represented in business, business trainings and, more generally, the workplace. Generally speaking, few Afghan women work outside the home. Those that do are usually limited to major cities such as Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif or Kunduz. Information about women who work – the work they do, their experiences, and successes – remains largely unreported.

The media development sector in Afghanistan is flourishing. Certainly, there are challenges ahead – but the immense developments undertaken over the previous five years are a cause for optimism.

Component One: Station Development

Station development, the centerpiece of the project, has been a resounding success. In three years, Internews has built, staffed and trained 31 successful stations across the country, and provided major technical and training support to many others. Each of those stations both broadcasts locally created information to and about local communities, and provides employment and revenue for local communities. The stations are also a means for the reconstruction effort to disseminate information about programs to those communities. Furthermore, the stations are popular. An Altai Consulting survey, released in March 2005,⁶ showed that Internews-supported stations were extremely popular in their coverage areas. On average, 80% of locals knew the stations and 79% of those surveyed listened to the stations. The survey also showed positive signs of station integration in to the communities. 31% of respondents knew who managed the station and 29% had called or sent a letter to the station. An Inkeshaf Consulting study demonstrated that Internews stations had been popular with elections candidates wanting to communicate with their local constituents.⁷ Internews radio stations broadcast 755 announcements, compared with 874 on state radio and TV broadcasters and 683 on other commercial radio and TV stations.

⁶ Altai Consulting, "Afghan Media - Three Years After,: Nationwide MediaEvaluation Project, United States Agency for International Development,September 2004/March 2005.

⁷ Inkeshaf Consulting.

Internews began the project aiming to maximize Afghan-controlled broadcast coverage. In April 2003, Internews' technical staff compiled a countrywide Radio Coverage Estimate. Station managers drew estimates of footprints for their stations on maps. These were then mapped to settlement estimates provided by the UN. This provided a 'ceiling' of the maximum number of people who had access to local radio. That ceiling was placed at 37%. The Internews team set a secondary goal to increase that figure by 25% in rural areas – an estimated additional one million people. Internews and the Canadian NGO, IMPACS distributed over 200 information and application packs explaining the purpose of local radio and provided an application form in Dari. Stations were selected on the basis of: the application's quality, the ability to obtain appropriate land from the community and the availability of willing volunteers to staff the stations in their nascent stages.

Following station selection, the Internews technical team surveyed the selected land, and on approval, installed the transmitter and radio studio. Each station team then undertook extensive training in radio production, basic journalism, and station management.

Over the course of the grant, Internews has regularly sought to increase the stations' footprints, by either upgrading their transmitters or moving the stations to more appropriate locations.

Station sustainability remained one of Internews' key goals throughout the life of the grant. By January 2006, nine stations were earning enough money locally to be self-sufficient. More stations were expected to reach a break-even point by the end of 2006, as they received advertising revenue by broadcasting programs for international NGOs and local businesses.

Achievements by Internews-Supported Radio Stations

Internews' contribution to station set-up varied according to community and station needs. As a general guide, however, Internews assisted the station select a location, procured and provided relevant equipment, installed transmitters and built studios, ran beta testing, funded the station launch, and initially funded staff salaries and operational expenses. Internews provided equipment as a grant to each of the stations, with the expectation that ownership would be transferred as the stations met certain production and management goals. Internews felt it was more appropriate to provide equipment on a no-cost lease basis, and to transfer ownership at a later date, once stations had demonstrated maturity and development management and production systems. Internews also contributed an extensive supply of radio programs through its Tanin distribution network and ran intensive preparatory training. As the stations launched, Internews placed international mentors with a number of the stations to work intensively with the stations for periods of between two weeks and two months to strengthen local production capacity. (see **Training**)

What follows is a summary of Internews' direct support for each of the 31 stations.

Radio Killid started broadcasting in Kabul beginning on August 1, 2003. Owned by Afghan NGO, Development and Humanitarian Services Afghanistan (DHSA), Internews provided the station with equipment, installation, and studio development, ongoing technical assistance and support in licensing / frequency applications. Internews also seconded three international mentors, Sally Cooper, Raman Nanda and Hamida Aman, to work with Radio Killid for two months on program design, station management, and basic journalism.

The station began broadcasting Afghan music, using an extensive archive. Initial programs included non time-sensitive programs from Tanin's archive. The station launched with seven full-time and six part-time staff, including station manager Nabih Paktin, a well-known radio personality in Afghanistan. Later that year, Internews editor Najeebullah Zahed trained Killid staff in Cool Edit and Mirwais Social, Internews' production unit manager, conducted a workshop on how to use studio equipment.

In August 2004, Technical Director Christian Quick supervised Radio Killid's expansion. Internews placed a FM repeater on Kabul's TV Mountain, adding over a million people to the Killid signal, after which it reached parts of Logar, Parwan and Wardak Provinces.

In December 2005, the technical unit repaired Killid's transmitter after technical malfunctions.

Radio Bamiyan first went on the air on August 17, 2003, making it the first local radio station in the central region of Afghanistan. Internews contributed start-up costs, technical assistance, equipment, launch costs, and training.

Radio Bamiyan was formally inaugurated by Afghan Vice President Abdel Karim Khalili and US Charge d'Affaires David Sedney. Khalili called the station a 'vital link' in the rebuilding of the Hazarajat region. Houriya Shafiq, a woman doctor who also worked part time at the station, described the opening of the station as "the biggest single sign that things are changing since the Taliban blew up our statues."

Radio Bamiyan was one of Internews' most financially successful stations and earned more than \$2,000 in advertising revenue in its first six months of operation.

In July 2004, Internews provided a DVB satellite downlink so Radio Bamiyan could receive and air Salaam Watandar. The Internews team later explored the option of upgrading the station to an AM station to increase its reach, but decided instead to move the transmitter to a more appropriate position.

Radio Sharq in Jalalabad was inaugurated on September 30, 2003 by Haji Din Mohammad, Governor of Nangarhar province. Having the Governor perform the inauguration was a significant achievement, as he had ordered the station closed during signals testing. The station is located in a politically sensitive area and there had been some criticism from the provincial government over the station broadcasting too much music.

On opening, the radio station broadcast 12 hours every day and had a full-time staff of 12 journalists, which was the largest of all Internews stations. Sharq Radio broadcasts 50% of its content in Pashtu and 50% in Dari. The provincial government has set up a four-member commission to monitor the broadcast content.

Internews contributed set up costs, technical assistance, equipment, launch costs, and training. In August and September 2003, Internews conducted computer, journalism and radio training at Radio Sharq. In February 2004, Internews installed a VSAT Internet system and computer network for station staff and the community.

By the fourth quarter of 2003, Radio Sharq led the Internews supported stations in commercial revenue, having earned over \$8000 since its opening. By July 2004, it was earning enough money locally to be self sufficient.

Radio Tiraj Mir in Pul-e Khumri, Baghlan province was inaugurated on October 15, 2003 by the Governor of Baghlan, Mohammad Omar Tiraj. Mir broadcasts for 16 hours a day, 70% in Dari, with the remainder in Pashtu. The station director is veteran journalist Mahfouz Saedi, who returned from Kabul to his native Baghlan to start the project. When it opened, the station had four staff, two of whom were women.

Internews contributed set up costs, technical assistance, licensing/frequency support, equipment, launch costs, and training. Internews provided intensive computer, journalism and radio training in August and September 2003. Internews conducted regular equipment maintenance and repair visits over the life of the grant.

Mille Paygham Radio station in Logar province was inaugurated on October 23, 2003 by the Deputy Minister of Information and Culture, Abdul Hamid Mubariz and Internews President David Hoffman. The presence of senior Afghan officials and the general public indicated their strong interest in the station. The radio station was situated in a politically conservative area that had earlier seen security threats against progressive developments, such as women's education. Two girls schools were burnt down in the district, one of them only a month before launch. In this context the speed with which it was accepted was a major step forward for the area.

Within six weeks of going on the air, the station had taken on a female presenter. In its first month of operations, the station had developed a program whereby listeners wrote in with song requests and comments about local affairs. The response to this was overwhelming as the station received more than 300 letters in the month. Radio Mille Paygham has also been at the forefront of the quest for self-sustainability, issuing stamps in local shops, which had to be used by listeners writing to the station.

A partnership between IMPACS and Internews, Internews provided set up costs, technical assistance, licensing/frequency support, equipment, launch costs. Internews provided intensive computer, journalism and radio training in August and September 2003. In July 2005, Nai conducted a radio needs assessment at Mille Paygham Radio,

analyzing their needs in journalism, management, community participation, technical capacity and business development.

Due to security threats two Afghan police were set to guard the station in June 2004. The station's Board of Directors considered closing, but decided against it.

Radio Mille Paygham also encountered accessibility issues. The station had been built at the top of a hill for security reasons. To counter this, IMPACS and Internews set up a women's recording studio in the town. Internews provided the equipment and engineering knowledge, while Jamie Little of IMPACS trained 12 women from Logar province in radio journalism. After the course, Internews hired two of the women as full time employees of the station.

Sahar Radio station was launched in Herat on October 25, 2003. It joins the Voice of Afghan Women's Radio in Kabul and Rabia Balkhi Radio in Mazar-i Sharif as a women-run station. The Women Activities and Social Services Association (WASSA), an Afghan women's NGO partnered with Internews to establish the station. The station is owned by Hulan Khatabi who heads WASSA. In its early stages, the station broadcast between 90-120 minutes everyday, half of which came from Tanin.

Internews contributed start-up costs, technical assistance, licensing / frequency support, equipment, launch costs, and training.

In the later part of the fourth quarter of 2004, Internews sent an assessment team to Radio Sahar to identify a new location for the station. For technical and editorial reasons, Internews felt a new location would give Radio Sahar better coverage. Internews also made additional equipment donations for the station. In March 2005, the Business Development department designed three promotional packages for Radio Sahar, as they had been facing difficulties from competitors. They also had repeated problems broadcasting female singers. The Technical Unit also repaired Sahar's connectors and transmitters in February 2006.

Radio Azad Afghan. In Kandahar, Internews partnered with Afghans for Civil Society (ACS), an Afghan-American foundation, set up by Qayum Karzai, the President's brother, to establish Radio Azad Afghan. The station began broadcasting on December 6, 2003, and reached over 244,000 people in Kandahar City. Internews contributed start-up costs, technical assistance, procurement expertise and support, licensing/frequency support, launch costs, and training. Sarah Chayes, a former NPR correspondent, worked closely with the staff to develop programming. As it opened, the station was on air six hours daily with two hours of in-house programming including unique work such as "Victims of the Guns," a program wherein the reporter interviews those injured by guns or the actual perpetrators of the crimes. In 2004, Internews provided the station with a women's production unit, using a grant of \$10,950 from a US-based NGO called Working Assets,. The station airs 80% Pashto and 20% Dari programming.

Radio Naw-e Bahar in Balkh City opened on January 4, 2004 and broadcast nine hours a day with 50% Pashto, 40% Dari, and 10% Uzbek programming. When it opened, the station had four full-time employees and nine part-time staff, five of which were women. Internews contributed set up costs, technical assistance, licensing/frequency support, equipment, launch costs, and training. In January 2004, Internews organized an internship program between Radio Rabia Balkhi, in Mazar-i Sharif, and Naw-e Bahar where two employees from each station (one technical, one journalist) worked in the other for 15 days. This proved useful for both stations as the employees learned the ins and outs of running a different station. On opening, Radio Naw-e Bahar independently produced three current affairs programs and seven programs on a range of issues, such as health, education and religion, in collaboration with local civil society groups and the local mullah.

In collaboration with IMPACS, **Radio Rabia Balkhi** was opened in Mazar-i Sharif on January 8, 2004. This women's station produced 11 programs about a variety of issues including news, but most were geared towards women's affairs, such as "Women in Society," parenting and famous women around the world. Nine full-time staff, all women, operate the station. Internews supported the station by providing equipment, space, studio set up and technical training while IMPACS provided editorial advice, journalism training, and some equipment. As part of this set-up, Internews installed a full digital studio in November 2003. Later, Internews technicians upgraded the studio, *installed air conditioning, and installed an echo system and sound system in July 2006.*

Radio Sulh-e Paygham. Internews considers Khost, a conservative city with a strong intellectual presence, an ideal location for an independent radio station. Radio Sulh-e Paygham went on the air at the end of January 2004 reaching at least 58,000 people with nine hours of programming a day on 93.1 MHz FM. On opening, the station produced ten programs, five independently, and five in partnership with local civil society groups, such as Gudar Pa Puri Gharla Oruna ("The Brothers on the Other Side of the Sea") a program about the lives of the Diaspora abroad. Another program, Naqluna ("Fictions"), was a short folklore program. 90% of programming is in Pashto and 10% is in Dari.

Internews provided intensive computer, journalism and radio training in August and September 2003. Internews also initiated a business development scheme at Radio Sulh-e Paygham, hiring a local business development officer who was trained in marketing, advertising and management in Kabul. The Business Development Officer earned 15% of all revenue generated. Internews further upgraded the station in 2006.

Radio Qarabagh, Quarabagh district, Kabul province, was the first radio station in Afghanistan to follow a classic community radio model. The local Shura contributed 20% of licensing costs and built the radio station itself, a considerable expense for a rural Afghan community, demonstrating their commitment to the station. Broadcasting since January 1, 2004 on 91.3 MHz FM with six hours of programming a day, the station reaches 253,000 residents of the Shomali Plain. To increase the stations' production capacity, Internews brought one journalist from the station to train with *BaKhabar*. This had tremendous success and that journalist, Qiam Muddin, is now one of the program's

most ambitious regional correspondents. Internews also trained two people from the station in Kabul on computer basics and digital editing. In its first month of operations, the station was receiving more than 250 letters each week from listeners. Internews installed the DVB downlink in June 2004.

Radio Qarabagh was one of the three stations earning enough money locally to be self-sufficient in July 2004. By September 2004, **Radio Qarabagh** had earned enough money from playing PSAs that they built a second studio for women. Radio Qarabagh was also used as a baseline example for standardizing Internews stations across the country.

In July 2005, Nai conducted a radio needs assessment at Radio Qarabagh, analyzing their needs in journalism, management, community participation, technical capacity and business development.

Radio Nedaye Sulh, broadcasting since February 14, 2004 in Ghorriyan is one of the most unique community-supported radio stations in the country. Jamshed Azizi, a graduate of the Law and Political Science Faculty of Herat University, is the concessionaire for the radio station. Before Internews helped found this radio station, he and several friends were running a five-hour home-made TV station broadcasting local news and Iranian films every evening. After Internews provided basic training and equipment, the radio station was up in several weeks and now serves more than 60,000 people in the district and region with 10 hours of programming a day. Mr. Azizi, with his committed team, sometimes works until midnight producing five hours of in-house programming aired the following day before the TV airs in the evening. 80% of the programming is in Dari and 20% in Pashto. In addition to their daily five hours of programming, they play Tanin and music, but because of their location in Herat province, they have trouble broadcasting music by female singers. Fahim Zawoosh, the Internews Radio Network Organizer, also held a one-week course on journalism and presenting with 15 students in Ghorriyan (nine of whom were women) while acting as interim manager.

Radio Nedaye Sulh also participated in Internews' local Business Development scheme.

Radio Zohra, in Kunduz, opened on March 20, 2004 in collaboration with IMPACS, the third women's radio station Internews and IMPACS opened together. Radio Zohra started broadcasting two hours a day with plans for to increase this to hours to eight. In early May, Internews brought two station staff to Kabul for two weeks of computer training.

Radio Zohra was one of the three stations earning enough money locally to sustain themselves in July 2004.

Radio Sedaye Adalat opened in Chagcharan, Ghor province, on March 20, 2004. Deen Mohammed Azimi, Ghor's deputy governor opened the station saying, "I am proud that Ghor's first major project in two years...is an opening of the mind...This radio will open our people's minds and once they are open, anything is possible." In the first weeks of broadcasting, Radio Sedaye Adalat was inundated with letters of congratulations, requests

and poetry. “You give us hope. I listen to you every day and my heart is glad,” wrote Qutbuddin, a listener in Chagcharan.

Internews contributed start-up costs, technical assistance, licensing/frequency support, equipment, launch costs, and training. Internews repaired the station's transmitter in March 2005 and seconded a *BaKhabar* correspondent to work with Dr Farid Raaid at the station mentoring on journalism basics, studio equipment and computers.

In October 2005, Internews conducted a 10 day in-house mentoring and technical maintenance workshop at Radio Sedaye Adalat. With support from Internews mentors, the station secured a \$400 per month PRT civic education program contract. Internews technicians also repaired computers and installed network cabling, delivered training in mixer use and maintenance. The mentors ran training in program scheduling, which resulted in a 7.5 hour per day increase in daily programming (including Salaam Watandar peak hours).

In its first three months of operation, Sedaye Adalat was forced to revise its program schedule after complaints from the community that playing Indian music in the morning was inappropriate. The station lost their computer and other small equipment when the city was captured by the Qumandan Sallam militia in June 2004.

Radio Imam Sahib opened in Kunduz province on May 11, 2004 as a relay station to play Salaam Watandar. It later launched as a fully staffed station in April 2005. Internews procured land, provided and installed equipment and provided intensive training during the period between the initial opening and the final launch. Internews ran a 15-day Cool Edit training in Kabul for journalists from Radio Imam Sahib in March 2005.

Radio Istiqlal in Baraki Barak, (Logar province) went on air in July 2004 after several months of negotiations with local authorities. Internews contributed start-up costs, technical assistance, licensing/frequency support, equipment, launch costs, and training. Twelve Radio Istiqlal journalists also attended an “Introduction to Radio” class at Internews’ training facilities in Kabul in July 2004. Internews ran ongoing technical training at Radio Istiqlal at each repair/upgrade.

Radio Ghaznawyan in Ghazni province launched on 12 August 2004. Internews contributed land acquisition, start-up costs, equipment, installation and training. Radio Ghaznawyan participated in the local Business Development Office scheme, and performed exceptionally well. In February 2005, the station raised \$1,100, which completely covered monthly operating expenses.

Radio Ammu in Badakhshan began broadcasting in September 2004 six hours a day to 22,000 people in and around the provincial capital of Faizabad. Internews secured station land from a local commander on behalf of the station, and provided basic training for station staff in July 2004. Internews also installed a DVB downlink.

Radio Nili Day Kundi began broadcasting in September 2004 ten hours a day to 12,000 people in the remote province of Dai Kundi, twenty-four hours drive from Kabul. Internews facilitated licensing agreements, land procurement, equipment and basic training. Internews also installed a DVB downlink.

Radio De Yawali Ghag went on air in Saydebad, Wardak province, in September 2004 for ten hours a day. Unfortunately, the scheduled opening was cancelled due to security fears in that province. Sixty volunteer university students joined together to run the station. Internews trained four staff members to work at the station and provided initial operational and start-up costs. Internews also installed a DVB downlink.

Internews and Mercy Corps partnered to open **Radio Sabaoon** on September 24, 2004 in Lashkarga, Helmand province. Internews provided equipment, installed the studio, masts and transmitters. In June 2004, Internews trained seven students, three of them female, from the Helmand Mercy Corps offices in Windows and Cool Edit in preparation for the station opening. Internews installed a DVB downlink in September 2004. Radio Sabaoon also participated in the local Business Development officer scheme. Internews assisted the station move to a new location in early 2005. In November 2005, Internews ran an in-house training at Radio Sabaoon on producing talk shows and game shows. Internews provided 50 radio sets to be distributed as a marketing strategy during the game shows.

Radio Takharistan, in Taluqan, Takhar province, began broadcasting on October 5, 2004. The Editor-in-Chief of the station, Malalay, is a community social activist and female constitutional Loya Jirga delegate. Four people from the station completed a 20-day course in basic journalism and practical radio skills at Internews' training center in Kabul. One of the four was hired to become a local *BaKhabar* correspondent. Internews upgraded the station in January 2006. Internews also installed a DVB downlink.

Radio Qoyush in Maymana, Faryab province, began broadcasting on 88.2 MHz FM on October 20, 2004. The station was set up in partnership with IMPACS, the Canadian Media Development NGO. Internews provided the technical equipment, installation and training. An international IMPACS trainer spent two months in Maymana to work with the team.

Radio Malistan, in Ghazni province, opened on October 25, 2004. The station, which reaches some 3,300 people in a remote part of the province, is managed by Ibrahim Payall, a local veteran journalist with experience reporting in Iran and Mazar-i Sharif. The local government provided the station with three rooms, so Internews did not have to fund a building. Radio Malistan received technical repairs and training in October 2005.

In November 2004, **Radio Spin Ghar**, in Nangarhar province and **Radio Zafar** in Paghman, Kabul province went on air as full stations, broadcasting their own materials. Previously, they had only broadcast Salaam Watandar as relay stations. Internews provided technical start-up assistance, technical installations, licensing support, initial operational costs, basic training and land acquisition for both of these stations. Radio Spin Ghar received its license in February 2005. Prior to this, it had been operating under

an agreement with the Ministry of Information and Culture to allow unlicensed stations run for a testing period. Internews upgraded Radio Zafar in 2006.

Radio Jaghori in Ghazni province went on air on January 5, 2005. The station was broadcasting 10 hours a day, including Salaam Watandar, on 93.5 kHz FM. Internews partnered with Future Generations to launch the station – with Internews providing technical assistance and equipment. Radio Jaghori also received the Tanin distribution.

Radio Paktika in Sharan, Paktika province launched on April 5, 2005. The station forms part of a mini-repeater network, and has two masts to extend coverage as far as possible. Internews ran intensive start-up training in June 2005, and contributed equipment and technical support. The station is housed in a PRT-donated building, after originally running out of the governor's compound. Internews also completed a propagation study exploring the viability of establishing an AM station instead of the repeater network, and provided solar power equipment.

In mid June 2006, Internews received a report that the Taliban had asked for 1% airtime to broadcast on Radio Paktika. Internews' Radio Management Committee, formed in June 2005, negotiated to resolve the issue.

With additional funding from the Danish government, Internews launched **Radio Sada-e-Haqiqat** in Samangan province on October 19, 2005. Internews provided equipment, radio mentoring, installation and technical assistance, licensing support and training. Internews acquired the license in January 2006.

Radio Sadae Sul, Parwan province launched on 8 October 2001. The station received start-up support, technical assistance, production and journalism training.

Finally, **Watandar Radio** mast was set up in April 2005, ensuring Salaam Watandar is broadcast for Kabul audiences. Internews provided studio premises, donated equipment, built the station and provided licensing assistance to Watandar Radio.

Business Development

Business development initiatives took some time to develop. The first proposal sought to have at least two regional stations self sufficient within the first 18 months of operation. This initial goal has proven to be too optimistic – with proper consideration of prevailing economic and media contexts, the program's first stages focused instead on developing the skills and experience to get the stations up and running, while the latter parts were able to start focusing more on business development and sustainability.

Earlier business development initiatives saw Business Development Officer Noah Miller visit each of the stations to develop a business plan, draw up brochures and undertake basic business management training.

In 2004, Internews hired local Business Development Officers from five local stations. The Business Development Officers undertook month-long Kabul based training and

returned to their provinces to launch an advertising-based income generation mechanism. By February 2005, The newly trained business development officers in Herat, Bamiyan and Ghazni had made a good start, returning to their respective provinces to hold meetings with numerous NGOs and local businesses. Hamidullah Umeri, the local business development officer at Radio Ghaznawyan in Ghazni, raising \$1,100 in February 2005 – a figure that covers monthly operating expenses. Other stations have gradually increased self-sufficiency through local income generation rather than relying solely on income procured from the business development department in Kabul. As of July 2006, nine stations were self-sustaining.

The Business Development Department was the primary contact point for advertisers or NGOs and UN agencies wishing to publicize Public Service Announcements (PSAs) across the network. On receiving a contract for advertisements or a PSA, these are broadcast on Salaam Watandar, which is then broadcast on each of the stations. The revenue from the PSAs/advertisement are then distributed to each of the stations who broadcast the programs.

To ensure that each of the selected stations were playing the appropriate Salaam Watandar program, and to ensure that the clients were receiving maximum exposure from their investment, Internews contracted for and itself developed a variety of monitoring systems. Internews established a set of locally based monitoring officers in early 2006 to check what was being played on each of the local stations.

By the conclusion of the grant, Internews had assisted each station set up a bank account and has been working with the stations to have them submit financial reports to monitor how funds from the rebroadcasting of PSAs is being spent. Through these initiatives, Internews hoped to encourage responsible financial management.

Radio Network Coordination

Internews introduced a Radio Network Coordination (RNC) department in 2004 to manage and monitor station development, training and technical needs, community relations and complaints. The RNC department has been a key ally in communicating with the stations, monitoring progress and setbacks, and resolving disputes.

In its early stages, the RNC focused on conducting training needs at each of the Internews-supported stations. The department regularly mediated disputes between stations, local governors, local police and the community. As the department progressed, they found that most disputes arose either from local warlords or from local officials who believed the stations should not broadcast material that did not support their political positions. In June 2006, the RNC department represented Internews in negotiations on annual frequency costs with the Ministry of Telecommunications.

In June 2006, the RNC partnered with Nai to form a Radio Management Committee to act as a Complaints Committee and more rapidly deal with station concerns, complaints and station management problems.

Component Two: Production

Independent production houses nearly nonexistent in the early stages of Internews' grant. Internews understands that having local, independent programming fill the airways is an integral step for the development of Afghan media capacity. Furthermore, having a mechanism whereby local Afghans can critique, comment, or applaud new developments and initiatives key to establishing an accountable, democratic environment. Internews facilitated these goals of strengthening local Afghan programming and Afghan technical programming skills by initiating an in-house production studio and distribution network, and Salaam Watandar (Hello Compatriot). This element of the Internews program aimed to maximize the number, and diversity, of programs available and freely distributed to stations across the country. Internews supplemented the production studio with a distribution network that disseminated not only Internews produced programs, but also programming from other NGOs seeking to reach the nation's emerging radio network.

In the first year of the grant, Internews aimed to produce and freely distribute at least ninety minutes of programming daily. This figure was quickly met and surpassed. The very early stages of the grant saw Internews produce two programs: *Shahrak Atfal* (Children's City) and *Haqq-e Man Chist* (What is My Right?). *Shahrak Atfal* was a children's program that used dramatic dialogue to address issues important to children, such as going to school. *Haqq-e Man Chist* was an innovative program that explored human rights. Each show began with a human rights violation – for example, a soldier at a checkpoint demanding a bribe – in a drama format. At the crisis point, the drama broke out into panel discussions with a legal expert from the Afghan Independent Commission for Human Rights, a policeman and the show's presenter. *Haqq-e Mann Chist* broadcast programs on relevant social issues such as women's education and forced marriage. In the second quarter of 2003, Internews also produced a pilot edition of a sports program to cater to the large interest in sports.

Informal feedback from these early stages show that these programs were immensely popular, particularly *Shahrak Atfal*, with each show being played numerous times at the request of listeners. Noor Mohammed, station manager from Samangan Radio said local demand forced them to play every edition of *Shahrak Atfal* two or three times. Other feedback showed that the program was even played on local television in Shibergan and Taloqan where there were no local radio stations.

Internews also initiated partner productions with a range of external organization, including the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA). Internews and ICARDA produce *Kesht-e Khub Haasil-e Khub* (Good Harvesting, Good Reaping), a 15-minute program designed to educate farmers about agricultural issues. ICARDA hired an in-house journalist, Enyalluh Safi, whom Internews trained as an intern for three months in the Internews office. Internews Radio Producer Mirwais Social then co-designed the program and concept. The team edited the first two editions in the Internews studio.

As the production house developed, Internews introduced a set of workshops and internships. The internship program ran under the auspices of Internews' news program *BaKhabar*, and drew journalists from local radio stations who participated in an intensive two month training course before returning to their respective radio stations where they became correspondents for the program. The first batch of trainees in 2003 came from Jalalabad, Baghlan, Bamiyan, and Logar.

Salaam Watandar

Internews' in-house production house, Salaam Watandar began airing as the overall name for Internews programming on shortwave radio on June 15, 2004 from 6:00-7:30 in the morning and evening. The shortwave had such range that people in Finland wrote to Internews saying how clear the broadcast was.

By the end of June 2004, Internews distributed the program nationally via satellite, and broadcast on local terrestrial broadcasters. By the end of July, 21 stations throughout the country, including two state stations, were airing the program daily. These initial phases of broadcast surpassed projected population coverage. Based on UN population estimates, by July 2004, the program was reaching 8,431,030 people, or 42% of the population on AM and FM.

As of July 2006, 30 Internews-supported stations were broadcasting over four hours of Salaam Watandar programming daily. Internews' is able to distribute its business development funds through the advertisements and Public Service Announcements played on Salaam Watandar.

Other news programs broadcast on Salaam Watandar include:

***BaKhabar* Programming (News Program)**

BaKhabar is a daily news program that covers important national and international events. *BaKhabar* covers political, economic, security, social, and cultural events across the country.

BaKhabar began programming in mid-2003 with assistance from Dutch trainer Esther van Ghent and a team of five journalists headed by Mujeeb Khilwatgar. Internews initiated the program as an attempt to make news and current affairs accessible to Afghanistan's illiterate population – 80% of the country. The program features straight news reports inter-dispersed with studio chats designed to be both informative and casual – as close to the tone of normal Dari and Pashto conversations as possible, rather than using the formal versions of Dari and Pashto which are not used by large segments of the population.

The program was initially broadcast as a weekly 30-minute program. Growing technical and journalism skills allowed Internews to shift the program to a daily schedule, initially as a 10-minute program. Jamila Mujahed, who headed Voice of Afghan Women's radio at that time said, "We appreciate your activities and the work being undertaken by Internews after these long years of war." Over the life of the grant, this program has grown to broadcast for one and a half hours per day.

To engage local communities and involve local reporters in the national news, *BaKhabar* placed correspondents in regional areas across the country. *BaKhabar* also covers Afghan-relevant international news.

Some of *BaKhabar*'s highlights include:

- Salaam Watandar broadcast a candid “religious and ethnic tolerance” roundtable addressing the Danish cartoons and the protests they sparked. The panel included Afghan and International community, political leaders and experts. This broadcast across the nation on Ariana TV and Salaam Watandar. Prior to this broadcast, there had been no in-depth coverage of the issue, as journalists feared.
- Covering U.S. President George W. Bush's visit to Afghanistan. Salaam Watandar was one of the few agencies to broadcast analytical reports on the consequences of his trip for both the country and the region.
- Extended coverage of the May 29, 2006 riots in Kabul.

***Siyasar* Programming (Women's Program):**

Siyasar, Salaam Watandar's women's program is designed to broadcast women's issues: an opportunity for women to discuss their experiences after many difficult years. *Siyasar* also airs a talk show three times a week, in which successful women are invited to discuss their experiences. *Siyasar* programs concentrate on airing Afghan women's challenges and successes. Highlights include:

- Broadcasts of meetings held to celebrate International Women's Day, March 8, 2006.
- *Siyasar* invited ten successful women – Politicians, social activists, businesswomen, sportswomen, poets and shopkeepers to the studio in March 2006. The women discussed their work, experiences, and challenges in the hopes it would encourage other women.

***Sahat* (Health program): On-air clinic with Doctor Sharif Zarif**

The *Sahat* program is an on-air medical advice program. It takes live calls from the community about medical problems which are answered by the program presenter, a qualified physician. The numbers of listeners and callers have increased as people receive professional advice on seasonal and other illnesses. The program airs for 45 minutes every day except Fridays. Dr. Sharif receives an average of 1,000 questions per month.

***Zera'at* (Agricultural Show):**

Salaam Watandar's agricultural program airs agricultural news and issues to inform farmers throughout the country on trends and developments in the agriculture sector. The show is aired for half an hour every day except Fridays. *Zera'at* also invites agricultural professionals onto the show to discuss good cultivation techniques.

***Porswapal* Program (Question and Answer):**

Porswapal is a question and answer segment, where listeners call up, or send in questions via mail and Internet. Salaam Watandar staff then research and broadcast the answers. The program's main listeners are school and university students. Over the course of the program, their questions have been increasingly analytical and scientific, and require substantial research. By July 2006, *Porswapal* was receiving an average of 1,200 calls per month.

Election Coverage

Salaam Watandar provided ground breaking elections coverage for both the presidential elections in October 2004 and the parliamentary elections in September 2005.

Presidential Elections: October 2004

Internews' Production Unit began a targeted training campaign in late 2003 as preparation for covering the 2004 presidential elections. *Salaam Watandar* broadcast extensive coverage of the Constitution, the election process and each individual candidates to familiarize the population with voter registration, the idea of national elections, and individual candidates.

In September 2005, *Salaam Watandar* further stepped up its election coverage. One election program, *Shabhaya Aftabi* (Sunny Evenings) featured reruns of the BBC drama *Khaneye Naw, Zendegi Naw* (New Home, New Life). The BBC program showed contemporary Afghan problems and served as a foundation for conversation between guests and the host in *Shabhaya Aftabi*. Episodes focused on issues such as women's rights and land issues, with the guests then being invited to discuss these particular issues for the audience. The show served as a forum to introduce candidates to the public. To better familiarize listeners with the candidates, reporters from the program went out into the community to find little known facts about each candidate. Neighbors and friends were recorded talking about the candidate and these clips were played back to the candidate on air, where he/she would respond.

This format proved immensely popular and *Salaam Watandar* continually received positive feedback from around the country. More than ten candidates visited the *Salaam Watandar* studios for this program. After the elections, *Salaam Watandar* used this format will to interview other celebrities and politicians.

Parliamentary Elections: September 2005

In a ground-breaking broadcast, *Salaam Watandar* produced 16 hours of live coverage during the parliamentary elections on September 18, 2005, the first legislative elections in Afghanistan since 1969.

Part of these broadcasts included a two-hour evening program titled "Why did you vote? Why didn't you vote?" *Salaam Watandar* phones were jammed as dozens of listeners called in to respond. Pul-e Khumri resident Mohammad Asif said, "I voted so that we have security and peace." A man from Khost province said, "I was crying when I was voting." A woman from Kabul said, "I didn't vote because I couldn't find one person on that long list trustworthy."

The complex parliamentary and provincial council elections included 5,800 candidates and 6,000 polling stations, taking the country to its next step along the path to democracy.

The all-Afghan *Salaam Watandar* team coordinated their longest and most ambitious national broadcast with 31 independent local stations. Each station aired 20-minute live

reports at the top of every hour from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Over 120 reports were filed from journalists stationed at the far corners of the nation.

Unlike other Afghan media, Salaam Watandar journalists covered the Joint Election Monitoring Body (JEMB) press conferences in real time. Reporter Hossein Moin also conducted interviews with opposition parties and election observers. Sher Shah Taheri and Mirwais Jalalzai monitored international coverage of the election on Arabic and English networks. Salaam Watandar also monitored local coverage including on international stations BBC and Radio Azadi.

From 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. radio anchors Mujeeb Khilwatgar and Nasrat Shaji summarized the main stories of the day and conducted interviews with key election officials and candidates, including former presidential candidate Mohammad Mohaqiq and former planning minister Ramazan Bashardost.

Salaam Watandar also set up a special contact number for public service announcements to be used by election officials and security forces.

JEMBS worked closely with Salaam Watandar in the months leading up to the election and on the day to ensure critical public information was broadcast daily to communities across most of the nation's provinces.

Prior to the elections, the JEMBS established an initiative to sponsor election candidates' radio announcements to ensure some degree of equal access to the media for all candidates, irrespective of their social or financial background. Elections candidates selected the station they preferred to use for their donor-funded candidate announcements. Internews stations broadcast 755 announcements, compared with 874 on state radio and TV broadcasters and 683 on other commercial radio and TV stations.

Tanin

At the start of the Internews grant, Tanin was distributing two hours and 15 minutes of radio programming to all on-air radio stations every week. Currently, Tanin distributes 237 programs to 57 media outlets across the country each month. Tanin reaches as far as Kunduz to the north; Khost to the south; Laghman to the east; and Kandahar to the west. With an average program length of 30 minutes, Internews distributes some 120 hours of programming each month.

Feedback on the Tanin network has been thoroughly positive. In 2003, Habibullah Haqbin, Secretary for Bagghdis Local Radio said, "We want to express our appreciation to Tanin. This week we received seven of your programs, which we broadcast a total of 10 times, including the World Women's Day special program. Thank you."

Stations state that they broadcast the majority of programs two or three times, thus ensuring that these programs continue to make a significant contribution to radio programming in Afghanistan. Tanin also digitalized and distributed Internews' archive of 2,000 Afghan songs to stations.

Component Three: Technical Support

The development and maintenance of any radio station rests very strongly on the presence of a competent technical team to ensure that stations and studios function as they ought to. To support this, Internews decided to establish its own technical unit to service the stations, beginning in 2003. Internews Technical Director Christian Quick ran the technical staff of the project from the beginning of the grant through early 2005. The technical team designed stations and signal strength, chose station locations, mapped signal reach, and built stations from the ground up. The Technical Unit has also been responsible for finding, surveying and selecting appropriate land for each of the radio stations as well as their initial construction. At the same time, they ran regular training courses for station staff through the life of the grant (see Training and Station Development). The radio engineer Gavin Unsworth, has also worked closely with the Afghan technical unit, especially in the last year of the grant. Unsworth has been heavily involved in training the technical unit and building local capacity for station setup and technical repair.

The Internews Technical Unit also trained a selected technical officer at each of the stations to deal with simple technical difficulties, so there was strengthened local capacity to manage the studio without outside assistance.

The Internews Technical Unit has consistently supported the Internews network of radio stations through difficult and often dangerous trips to outlying areas of Afghanistan.

In its most recent stages, the Technical Unit has been used to offer direct technical support, installations and repairs to the Internews network of stations.

Signals Analysis

Early radio station development in Afghanistan was beset by difficulties in assessing the strength and reach of existing stations, estimating the strength and reach of proposed signals and correctly estimating population density in coverage areas. The most accurate means to identify population density has been to use UN population estimates, Internews introduced a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) element to its Technical Support activities to map signal reach onto population estimates. In December 2003, Internews hired four staff to analyze radio frequencies and signal coverage. They received a four-week training in GIS use at the Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS). Internews also supported two staff members from the Ministry of Communications to attend the training to ensure that ministry staff were able to analyze the maps.

Rusty Holleman, a GIS expert, joined Internews for three months from January 15, 2004 to assist the GIS team as they worked towards the first national signal map, the first full iteration of which was released in April 2004. Over time, the team prepared a national independent coverage map that analyzed national coverage of Internews partner station reach.

Component Four: Training

The overall objective of Internews' initial Afghanistan program was the provision of basic reporting and radio production skills to Afghan journalists working at state radio stations. By the end of 2002, a significant number of Afghan state broadcast journalists had gained core journalistic and production skills and other training had been provided by other media development agencies across the country. Thus, Internews' second training program targeted capacity building for independent radio broadcasting. Specifically, the goal was to enable local broadcasters to produce, maintain and sustain independent radio stations. This objective has been met. Radio broadcasters have been introduced to an array of diverse program styles, technical issues, business development and management techniques and issues, such as gender, drugs, and government accountability. Additional training is still required for a fully sustaining network of stations, but Internews has achieved significant capacity building to date.

Initially, Internews Network led the training program, but gradually stepped back as lead implementer and created local NGO Nai to ensure greater local ownership and sustainability of this program element. Internews supported Nai to receive funding from the European Commission, working in close collaboration with USAID-supported Internews projects elements. As a result, some of the initiatives mentioned here were partially funded by those bodies. Where this is the case, it will be noted.

Basic Skills Training

Internews' training department supported an average of 100 – 200 Afghan journalists to undertake training in radio production, basic journalism, computer skills, business development, marketing, technical support and language development each month throughout the grant. Training programs were run by a succession of international and national trainers through both station based and Kabul based workshops. Internews' initial aim was to see station staff competent in basic technical management and production. Internews placed international trainers with each of the newly opened broadcasters to mentor journalists and managers in program production, marketing, technical skills and to develop relevant program formats. Mentors worked with each of the stations for between two weeks and two months. As stations developed, Internews sent trainers to the stations for intensive production and computer skills workshops.

Technical Training

Internews also aimed to enhance technical proficiency. As each station came into existence, Internews ran initial technical training programs covering basic equipment installation use, and maintenance, with additional mentoring at each technical upgrade or repair. As the stations developed, Internews continued to hold both station-based and Kabul-based courses. As an example, Internews held a technical training for eight station representatives in Kabul in February 2005. Trainees studied transmitter repair, generator wiring and computer software updates. Also in February 2005, Internews' technical team visited the new Maymana station to train staff on the basics of technical radio operation.

In that month alone, fourteen other trips were made to stations for ongoing technical support.

Technical capacity development has remained a challenge throughout the program, Internews held multiple technical training courses over the life of the project. For example, in February 2004, Internews ran Afghanistan's first equipment maintenance workshop with local welders so they could locally manufacture transmission towers. In-house technical staff also received ongoing technical training from visiting technical advisors. In November 2005, Technical Advisor Gavin Unsworth trained Internews' technical staff on how to standardize FM stations to ensure they all meet basic international electrical and radio engineering standards.

Internews also introduced an IT department that ran workshops in Windows, Office, audio editing and Cool Edit for station staff. Nai's joint Internews-EC funded computer training covered everything from how to turn on a computer, to desktop terms and options, to using media players, installing windows and other software, to the use of Cool Edit, recording, mixing and editing sound, saving a recorded sound and editing an interview.

Program Design

To broaden the broadcasters' exposure to different journalistic styles, Internews offered workshops on alternative program design. Through this initiative, Internews aimed to introduce innovative program styles to the Afghan airwaves. One such innovative seminar took place in June 2004, led by Jacki Lyden of the US based National Public Radio (NPR). "My Life is Afghanistan" was a month-long course that introduced participants to "audio diaries," a program style similar to that of NPR's "This American Life," where the focus was for each journalist to produce a personal radio story, and emphasized the use of local voices in programming. Each of the 11 participants produced their own story, which later broadcast on local stations across the country. This particular training was a huge success, enabling journalists to tell their own stories, in turn leading to community dialogues through local stations. *BaKhabar* also ran a training program for regional journalists, bringing them to the Salaam Watandar studio for an intensive two-month current affairs training, later hiring them as regional correspondents for the program. In November 2004, Internews' Radio Network Coordination department ran a series of workshops on producing radio dramas.

Issues-Based Journalism and Information Training

As these basic skills developed, Internews introduced a series of issues-based workshops to strengthen understanding of program content. This component of the training program covered workshops on agriculture, gender, human rights, drugs, health and family planning. The workshops aimed to introduce participants to key theories, different attitudes, and relevant background to key issues in Afghanistan's development process. In August 2003, 16 regional journalists attended an Internews/ICARDA agricultural journalism workshop. The course included three site visits to Kabul farms and briefings from agronomists on key Afghan farming issues. Each journalist then produced a three-

minute radio piece. The bulk of these workshops ran out of the Nai Training Center (see Nai highlights below).

Business Development Training

As station sustainability, rather than station start-up emerged as a key issue for the media development sector, Internews and Nai introduced a business development element to the training program. This initiative endeavored to strengthen the stations ability to manage their own strategic planning, marketing, advertising and income generation. Workshops were run predominantly from Kabul, however Business Development Officer Noah Miller also ran station based training in marketing strategies, pricing of radio advertising, financial reporting, and sales techniques. In July 2004, Internews introduced local Business Development officers to five local stations. Business Development Officers undertook two intensive Kabul-based workshops covering basic sales techniques, financial reporting and promotional campaigns. The officers then returned to the stations to run publicity and marketing campaigns, earning a 15% commission on revenue generated. Internews held the first regional workshop on business development in March 2005. The Business Development department trained station staff in Kunduz and Takhar in marketing strategies, pricing of radio advertising, financial reporting, and sales techniques.

Distance Learning

Through Nai, Internews also wrote a distance-learning curriculum for journalists at regional stations. The pilot course ran in August 2004. 20 journalists attended the bilingual *Pashto Broadcasting*, which aimed to support bilingual reporting in Afghanistan's Dari and Pashtu languages. Later courses focused on conversational training and basic journalism skills such as interview techniques and basic reasoning. Given Afghanistan's population spread, security concerns, difficult terrain and linguistic diversity, the training continued to be well attended and well received.

Internship Program

In February 2005, Internews initiated a cooperative internship program with Sayara and IMPACS to offer on-the-job training to a new generation of media professionals - Afghan university journalism students. This initiative was later developed into Sayara's Novice Journalism Training Program (NJTP), and in mid 2006 ownership was handed over to the target universities. Internews awarded a sub-grant to Sayara in August 2005 to continue the internship program (see Sub-Grants section).

Training Center - Nai

In June 2004, Internews transformed office space into a training center with combined financial support from the EC and USAID. Internews launched Nai on June 22, 2004. Nai's board of directors elected Sanjar Qiam as the organization's first Executive Director in January 2005, enabling them to forge a second MoU with Internews Europe to complement the Internews Network training activities. Since then, Nai has grown into a fully functioning independent NGO with multiple donors, including Internews/USAID.

Nai currently has a training center computer facilities used to conduct targeted workshops for broadcast journalists. Training includes computer classes and workshops on human rights, gender, drugs, journalism, family planning and health.

Nai highlights:

- In December 2004, Nai introduced a series of public lectures on women's issues to promote public awareness and acceptance of women in public life. Co-funded by USAID and the European Commission, lectures were presented by Mrs. Habiba Sorabi, from the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and Mrs. Aziza Ahmadyar, the Regional Manager of local NGO, the Afghan Women's Resource Center. These forums were a prelude to a gender training project starting in January. The lectures were attended by journalists from various publications and organizations.
- Through a cost-share with Internews Europe, Internews continued a series of gender trainings in January 2004. Moneeza Hashmi from Pakistan conducted the courses for two weeks each, covering such topics as women's role in the media, gender stereotypes in the workplace, and gender violence. The course was attended by 15-20 students of mixed gender.

Under their first Internews sub-grant in 2005, Nai compiled a set of training curriculums and undertook initial steps towards managing the group independently. At the same time, Internews was working with Nai to provide mentoring in financial management and report/proposal writing. The success of this venture saw a complete handover of responsibilities in June 2005. In August 2005, Nai successfully received a grant from the EC for a 12 month training program that began in August 2005.

Internews awarded Nai a second sub-grant in August 2005 to continue operating the Training Center (see Sub-Grants section).

Component Five: Media Advocacy

This project has sought to encourage a media regulatory environment that facilitates the development of a free press. Central to this aim was developing stronger advocacy skills in Afghan advocacy NGOs so they were better equipped to lobby on behalf of a free press and improved media regulation. Having had very little access to the notion and practice of advocacy work, the initial step to achieve this was for Internews to lead the advocacy efforts, bringing in Afghan NGOs as often as possible, to expose them to advocacy techniques.

In 2003, Internews hired Mr Abdel Wahed Hashemi as Afghanistan's first media lawyer. Internews then identified a set of priorities for the development of a positive media regulatory environment, and set about lobbying the government and community for their implementation.

The first goal was to establish a cheaper and predictable process for radio registration and licensing. The results of this project were a great success. Targeted negotiations with the

Ministry of Communication and the Ministry for Information and Culture rewarded with a simpler, cheaper registration process.

The second goal was to see a provision ensuring freedom of expression included in the Constitution. In April 2003, Mr Hashemi and a second Internews consultant, Mr Nasrullah Stanikzai, in partnership with Afghan media NGOs, began to consult leading media figures about the Constitutional process with the aim of becoming involved. On April 27, 2003, Internews held a one-day seminar on media law for eight Afghan journalists. These efforts too, bore success, with the 2004 Constitution including the following:

- (1) Freedom of expression is inviolable.
- (2) Every Afghan has the right to express his thought through speech, writing, or illustration or other means, by observing the provisions stated in this Constitution.
- (3) Every Afghan has the right to print or publish topics without prior submission to the state authorities in accordance with the law.
- (4) Directives related to printing house, radio, television, press, and other mass media, will be regulated by the law.

As the program developed, Internews argued that both the Afghan population and the international community needed better access to authentic reports on the development of Afghanistan's free press. Thus, the Media Monitor and Media Watch Reports were born. Media Monitor reports initiated out of the Internews office in 2003, and were published quarterly. As one of its key achievements, Media Monitor published a systematic analysis of Afghan journalists experience in covering the October 2004 Presidential Elections. This report, published in September 2005, reported that Afghan journalists' biggest constraint in providing fair and objective news was the threat of warlords and local commanders. 36% of the journalists said the lack of security was the biggest obstacle in reporting on elections but over 28% identified the lack of finances as the primary reason, followed by 9% citing the lack of adequate staffing in media organizations.

As Nai became an independent, Afghan-led organization Internews saw an opportunity to develop Nai's capacity as an advocacy organization, and so passed on the monitoring responsibility to Nai, who then began to produce the Media Watch reports. Media Watch reports provide a regular overview of the key events impacting journalism freedom. In addition to reporting cases of intimidation and harassment, the reports also cover achievements in overcoming challenges - often through Internews having approached local or ministerial-level authorities. The reports are published in English and Dari, and distributed to key partners across the country, and are also posted on Nai's website. As they accumulate, the reports are developing into a record of Afghanistan's progression towards a freer media. Two Afghan researchers compile the reports through a combination of interviews and independent fact checking. In June 2006, Internews hired Pouya Kandhari, a Dari speaking French lawyer to work as Media Law Mentor and advise the Media Watch officers in research, advocacy and writing. Advocacy style publications remain in their infancy in Afghanistan, but Nai's Media Watch officers have established a well-respected publication.

The challenges in finding Dari-speaking lawyers with a media law background meant that the institutional development element of the Media Advocacy program did not get as much support as was first envisaged. Media advocacy activities tended to focus on using the Media Watch documents as a primary means of introducing legal / regulatory issues to Afghan NGOs.

Under the program's final modification, Internews undertook to provide an Afghan media lawyer to work with Nai to design its media law work, provide training and collaborate on advocacy initiatives. While Nai was unable to find an appropriate lawyer in 2006, Internews seconded Pouya Kandahari to work with Nai on these projects, and also to coordinate advocacy and lobbying initiatives.

Internews, through support to Nai, also undertook to provide support for the development of Broadcast and Journalism Associations in the expectation that broadcasters could collectively express their shared interests and rights. Both of these initiatives hold great potential, but need to increase their output in order to meet this potential. Internews primarily supported these aims through the provision of sub-grants to local Afghan NGOs. Internews sub-granted Nai to develop a Broadcasters Association, while the Committee for Independent Journalism (CIJ), was tasked with developing a responsive and representative Journalism Association. In early 2006, Nai established the Afghan Independent Radio Association (AIRA). The Afghan Independent Journalists Association (AIJA) held its first annual meeting in August 2005, where they elected Rahimullah Samander to lead the organization. Since then, the group has dedicated its time to registering members, collecting membership fees and creating membership cards. The group has also been establishing set of protocols for when they are called in to represent the interests of a fellow journalist.

During this latter part of the program, Internews also established a Media Law Working Group for key media representatives working on a range of media law and lobbying issues. The Group has prepared policy and research papers for Afghan decision makers. In June 2006, Internews also hired a Media Law assistant to work with the Media Law Mentor. Since then, Internews has translated several Codes of Ethics into Dari, which have been distributed to Afghan media outlets. Internews has also begun translating and adapting a Media Law Risk Management Kit, aiming to provide journalists with practical advice on their rights and responsibilities under the new Media Law. Finally, Internews and Nai initiated a joint Committee on Media Law Training. The Committee will design a one to two week curriculum to provide journalists with a basic understanding of Media Law.

Media Watch Highlights:

Shaima Rezayee Death (v.6, July 2005): On May 18, 2005 Shaima Rezayee, a young NJ of the popular Tolo TV music program 'Hop', was found dead in her home three months after she leaving the station.

Official records say Rezayee was killed by a gunshot wound to the head, but journalist protection organizations claimed it was murder, terming it a blow for free and independent media in Afghanistan. Tolo TV, her former employer said her death had nothing to do with her earlier role on the station.

The TV station said Rezayee had only worked with Tolo for three months, and that her subsequent death three months later was entirely unconnected. Tolo added that Rezayee had been fired for her inability to abide by the organization's rules and regulations. Some have said Rezayee's lifestyle was too "modern" for certain sections of Afghan society and said this may have led to her murder by social conservatives.

Shinwar Troubles (v. 3, February 2005): Soon after Internews installed a radio transmitter in Shiwar in August 2005, a nearby Afghan border police post requested that the station provide them free power from the station's small power generator. At that time the station's need for power was limited and it acceded to the request, providing power to the border post from time to time.

As the station developed, its need for power grew and it stopped supplying free power to the border post. Border post officials then threatened station employees, ordering they re-supply the power. Officials threatened the station, saying it could come under attack at any time, and forced station employees to sign a letter absolving the police of responsibility for their safety.

In addition the police started harassing the station's journalists, stopping them at checkpoints and accusing them of being affiliated with Al Qaeda members. After the station manager complained, Internews approached the Interior Ministry and complained on behalf of the station. The Interior Ministry issued a letter supporting the stations right not to supply power to the border post.

Ongoing battles over "Un-Islamic Content" (v.4,5, March – May 2005): Between March and May 2005, Afghanistan's Ulema Council, headed by former Supreme Court Chief Justice Fazl Hadi Shinwari, issued a series of statements asking the government to censor the un-Islamic content shown on certain television channels. Mahkdoom Raheen, Minister for Information and Culture, told Media Watch he was in a difficult position, and said: "All visual media are requested to pay attention to the values of Islam and take into account the traditions of the people.... We are a nation with deep historical and cultural roots and foreign influence should not meddle with this. New generations should be brought up on solid Islamic and national culture."

Raheen emphasized that visual media had a special responsibility in shaping future generations and that visual media should "carry out this task keeping in mind the fact that these generations have passed their childhood in war and disturbances." The statement reflected a stark departure from earlier statements in support of free and independent media.

A later meeting of the Ulema Council (April 21 to 27, 2005), said the President's office had ordered the Minister of Information and Culture to control the content of TV programs. The President's office denied those instructions. A Presidential spokesman said the President was in favor of free, independent media. He said the only consideration was that the television broadcasts should not un-Islamic.

Afghanistan's Third Media Law (v. 13, June 2006): Media Watch published special review of the third media law, after it was officially gazetted in March 2006.

Media Watch argued the law was based on international law, and that its key changes were in refining and clarifying previous laws. It also formed three new commissions.

Under the previous law, two bodies were charged with regulating media bodies: the Independent Commission for Broadcast Media and the Media Commission for Investigating Media Related Offences. The new law introduced five commissions:

1. The Media High Council
2. The Private and Personal Media Commission
3. The National Radio-TV Afghanistan Commission
4. The Bakhtar Information Agency Commission
5. The Commission on Media Complaints and Violations

The new law defines membership criteria and the jurisdictions of each commission..

This new law comes as the third Mass media Law in just four years. The first Media Law was codified and issued on the 9th of March 2002 and the second was issued on the 4th of April 2004. Some media analysts and media professionals (Ahmad Zia Rafhat, Writer and Poet, Ahmad Shah Afghanzai, Director of Afghan TV, Hamid Noori, Director of the National Journalists Association, and others) questioned the successive changes to the Media Law, saying that they discredit its validity.

In a National Assembly meeting, Alleme Balkhe, a parliamentarian from Balkh province, said: "The (then) Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Saeed Makhdom Raheen, adopts and changes the Law as he sees fit". Raheen countered that continual changes to the law were simply a result of the rapid developments in Afghanistan's mass media.

Other Activities

In the last year of the USAID grant, Internews began to manage a range of sub-grants to local Afghan NGOs working on media development. After an initial application process where potential sub-grantees submitted proposals, budgets, and activity outlines, Internews allocated sub-grants to: Nai, Pajhwok Afghan News, Sayara for their Novice Journalism Training Program (NJTP), Center for International Journalism (CIJ) and The Killid Group – Mursal Magazine.

In addition to overseeing the management and administration of the grants, this element of the program sought to build institutional capacity with each of the sub-grantees

through mentoring in financial management, accounting, report and proposal writing and general management skills. Throughout the course of the grant Internews also introduced monthly sub-grantee meeting to facilitate information sharing and collaborative work among the sub-grantees.

The transition to a more regulated grants distribution was challenging for the majority of sub-grantees, who were unfamiliar with the format, and rationale behind the reporting process. With the exception of The Killid Group, the sub-grantees had not previously been required to fulfill the same reporting requirements. Sub-grantees undertook to submit monthly financial reports and quarterly narrative reports, but for the large part of the grant period sub-grantees were untimely in submitting the reports. This then, in some cases, delayed the completion of activities.

Each of the sub-grantees showed improvement in financial management and reporting standards over the course of the grant, and have been familiarized into a regulatory grant framework. Further mentoring, particularly in business management, grant writing and advocacy will be necessary to fully develop their institutional potential.

Nai

Nai is an Afghan NGO that grew out of Internews Networks' training activities in Afghanistan. Nai sought to increase the journalistic, technical and management capacity of independent community based radio stations across Afghanistan. The activities provided for in this grant were identified in a two-month "action oriented" assessment project that began in March 2005. That project conducted assessment and evaluation of independent, community based radio capacity and training needs, with the aim of then designing appropriate training curriculums and workshops. Following this assessment, Nai was granted funding from Internews to conduct the identified workshops in, among other things basic journalism, computer skills, business development, human rights and gender training, CoolEdit and technical training.

Over the course of the grant period, Nai consistently delivered on their aims, having exceeded the proposed number of workshops and training programs and regularly adapting their training curriculum as new needs arose. Internews was impressed by the strength of Nai's training program as well as the participant feedback that accompanied it. Internews was further impressed with Nai's endeavours to bring in further funding, and to seek alternatives for sustainability.

Center for International Journalism

The Center for International Journalism is an Afghan NGO that focuses on the provision of journalism training for practicing journalists. CIJ has also formed the Committee to Protect Afghan Journalists (CPAJ), an organization dedicated to the protection of Afghan journalists, and which advocates on press freedoms. Further to this, CIJ acts as the lead agency for the Afghan Independent Journalists Association (AIJA), which aims to assist working journalists through protection, advocacy and practical support.

Internews allocated a sub-grant to CIJ to facilitate its training and advocacy programs. After a slow start, CIJ eventually pushed through a significant number of their activities in the last few months of the grant. During this time, CIJ made huge improvements to its Internews-funded program: activities were carried out quickly and across the set province. Financial reporting and financial management improved dramatically over the course of the grant.

The Killid Group

DHSA-TKG is a local Afghan NGO that has been operating in Afghanistan since 1992. Their media development and distribution arm, The Killid Group (TKG), has been producing and distributing a weekly national women's magazine, Mursal, since 2003 for the purpose of exposing the country to women's issues. The weekly has a print run of 15,000 copies, which are distributed to each of Afghanistan's 34 provinces through their distribution arm, Nye Express. The magazine was initially designed as a source of basic, simple to read, information for the average Afghan women: that is, to provide entertaining coverage encourage creativity and hope. Analysis of sales shows that high school girls represent the largest share of the audience, however according to TKG, each magazine purchased has a readership of approximately 10 women.

Internews was satisfied with TKG's performance over the grant period. TKG have met their projected activities and objectives, and have been creative in the search for self-sustainability. Internews has been particularly impressed with TKG's timely narrative and financial reporting requirements.

Pajhwok Afghan News

Pajhwok Afghan News (PAN) is an Afghan news service that provides an online "news-wire" style service in Dari, Pashtu, English, Urdu and Arabic languages. Their head office is based in Kabul, with field offices and freelance reporters across the country. PAN aims to become a self-sustaining business through earning revenue from subscriptions and advertising. Pajhwok recently launched an Arabic service, which is being run by a Saudi based manager who works for commission on revenue earned through advertising and subscriptions. They have also launched a photo service, which recently sold a photo for \$846 through an agent (PAN will receive 40%). The website has facilities for advertisements, job vacancies, and announcements, through which PAN receives revenue.

Internews has been extremely impressed with the work of Pajhwok Afghan News over the course of the Internews grant. Rising subscription and advertising revenue is indicative of Pajhwok's hard work and quality product. PAN management have been extremely pro-active in seeking revenue from Afghan based sources, and have received over 4,000 expressions of interest in subscriptions from internationally based customers.

Sayara Media Group

Sayara Media and Communications are a media development company who received funding from Internews to run their Novice Journalism Training Program (NJTP), a program based out of regional universities that aims to train students in practical

journalism skills. The NJTP program partners with Journalism faculties (or in their absence, Education/Literature faculties) at the universities, to set up radio production units, and, ideally, radio stations, at the universities. At the beginning of their grant, Sayara ran “Youth Voice,” a national programming network that produced national weekly news and current affairs programs aired either on NJTP stations or other local stations. NJTP also assisted students in undertaking internships with various media outlets, and ran “Media Centers” which provided computer courses/internet access.

Over the course of the grant, Sayara delivered on the project activities set out in their initial proposal. Internews was impressed by the development of the project, and in particular the strengthening of “Youth Voice” that occurred throughout the duration of the project. Sayara has further developed and maintained a strong relationship with each of its partner universities. Internews was also impressed with Sayara’s input into the development of university stations and their cooperation and support of regional Journalism faculties.

Media Coordination Meetings

As more agencies entered the realm of media development in Afghanistan, Internews initiated monthly media coordination meetings to discuss ongoing priorities and activities within the media development community. Internews held the first meeting in April 2006, with representatives from only eight media development agencies. In only four short months, the meetings had gained popularity and were attended by more than twenty representatives eager to coordinate activities in the face of declining donor funds.

Media Review and Planning Conference

On June 15 and 16, 2006, Internews Afghanistan ran a Media Review and Planning Conference to assess Afghanistan’s achievements in media development and to identify ongoing challenges. The workshop was hosted by the American University of Afghanistan.

At the outset of the seminar, participants classified the state of Afghan media as “beginning to move towards a free media.” Collective opinion was that the sector had developed rapidly from its virtual non-existence in 2001, but was still vulnerable to a range of threats. The most oft-cited of these threats was managing to develop the skills and markets to self-sustain the media sector in Afghanistan’s uncertain economy.

An underlying theme that emerged from discussions was that donors had begun to pull out of the sector too soon, leaving agencies without the skills, experience or resources to continue managing without additional support. Security fears were also put forward as a key threat to developing an independent press. Closely following this were concerns over the development and implementation of the new media law – participants felt they did not have a proper understanding of the law and its regulations, and they also feared that government officials would have similar difficulties, making it ineffective. Another overriding threat to developing a free press was the difficulties associated with Afghanistan’s geography – the expansive, mountainous country-side makes travel and communication, and therefore reporting, exponentially more difficult. That said, the

participant's discussions and writings expressed an overriding sense of pride at having been part of the development of media in Afghanistan. Taking broadcast and print media to the provinces was seen as a key step in educating Afghanistan's population.

The latter part of the conference was dedicated to identifying collectively supported goals for the Afghan media sector – first identifying the goals, and then the steps that needed to be taken to achieve them. The overarching goal for the future of Afghan media was a sector that facilitated positive community relations. This “community building” extended to relationships between individuals, different communities, and community relations with the government. Beyond this, participants sought a media that was sustainable, free and secure – it was to be a media that the community trusted because they knew it was acting in their best interests. In order to achieve these aims, the sector needs to acquire lawyers trained in media law, focus on research and training in business development and better targeting media outputs for the community.